

Songs from a Canadian Homestead

P. B.

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1923

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**SONGS FROM A CANADIAN HOMESTEAD.**

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# Songs from a Canadian Homestead

BY  
P. B.

MORLAND,  
Amersham, Bucks.  
1923.

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## SOMEWHERE.

There's a land that's very near ;  
Though it's very far from here ;  
Seen through eyes or dim or clear,  
Somewhere dear.

Somewhere distance never screens ;  
Somewhere sunshine always seems ;  
Somewhere thought on love's quick beams  
Ever dreams.

All I ever hope to be,  
When and where death comes to me,  
Mind and heart and soul agree,  
There with thee.

There's a land that's very near ;  
Though it's very far from here ;  
Seen through eyes or dim or clear,  
England dear.



**PART I.**

**WOMEN WHO WAIT.**

We are mates of the men who know  
100 above, 60 below—  
Hope of the spring with the work begun,  
August's despair when the hail has done.  
Mates? how does our mate-hood show?  
These are the things we women know.



## SOMEHOW I'LL GET THROUGH.

If ears could be deaf to this crying,  
If somewhere it's echoes could cease ;  
If only one could'nt help trying  
To get through the work and find peace ;  
But the children are ill and there's chores to do  
Outside and in, and I think I'm ill too—  
Still, somehow I'll get through.

If only rest came with the morning  
Not weariness, as with the night ;  
If only hope would not keep dawning  
With the mirage of rest in sight.  
But the children are ill and there's chores to do  
Outside and in, and I think I'm ill too—  
Still, somehow I'll get through.

If love killed the irk of endeavour,  
Then all of our struggles would cease ;  
For where love and work mate together  
We all reach our Haven of Peace ;  
So though children are ill and there's chores to do  
Outside and in, and you may be ill too—  
Still, somehow you'll get through.

## ONE DAY IT WON'T BLOW SO.

Fifty below !

Oh, if the wind wouldn't blow so !

Through cracks in the logs, you feel it about,

It finds the holes in your courage out ;

And hope is numb,

And your soul is dumb—

Oh, if the wind wouldn't blow so !

Fifty below !

Tomorrow will the wind blow so ?

From north or south or east or west—

(That's the side the mud's stuck in the best)\*

Will thought be cold

And your courage old—

Tomorrow will the wind blow so ?

Fifty below ;

One day when you feel the wind blow so,

Your thoughts will turn to the Spring that's near

Though March be windy and cold and drear ;

For hope is sprung and your soul gives tongue—

One day you know it won't blow so.

\*Mud is used to fill up the spaces when a house is built of logs.

## SOMEDAY HOUSE.

Someday these boxes will be no more ;  
Instead I'll have cupboards to use,  
And tables and chairs, and maybe then  
A " McClary " range and a real planed floor.  
So she worked in a shack sixteen by ten  
And dreamed of a twenty-four.

Someday I'll stay in my twenty-four.  
And not get tired with the work outside ;  
Then perhaps for the joy of the surprise,  
I'll think I'm back where I was before.  
So she toiled 'neath a boundless space of skies  
And dreamed of her twenty-four.

Someday I'll work, where I worked before,  
And not lie here as the months go by  
In pain, and wondering what may be—  
This or all that I've waited so for.  
So she lay in a space six feet by three,  
And dreamed of a twenty-four.

One day she sat in her house of dreams—  
Just the ghost of herself, no more—  
And watched how the summer sunlight played  
About her twenty-four,  
And dreamed that one day, perhaps, she might  
Be treading its well-planed floor.

One day she left her house of dreams,  
The dreamer she'd been before,  
To wait for health and all that meant—  
Life, and her twenty-four :  
But that well-worn dream-trail of hers, it sent  
Her away, and she came no more.

Someday House, it stands on a hill,  
At every window a curtain frill—  
Everything that she'd dreamed would be,  
Only no dreamer is there to see.

## A DAUGHTER OF TOIL.

Is it four walls make a home ?—ah no !  
But he'd mortgaged his land for a team.  
He could live in his mother's house, and so  
His wife gave up her dream.  
She came to a home she did not own,  
And could find no room for her things.  
Is a home, (a soul) a thing you can loan,  
Can life flow from such meagre springs ?

Then war, (they say) made the farmer's pile,  
Brought the thought of hope and of home ;  
For the prices were good and work was worth while,  
And the seeds of hope were sown.  
Till the talk of building grew into walls,  
And at last a roof was seen.  
(Shingles were dear, so until the price falls  
She must wait for her might-have-been).

But sickness came, his mother was ill ;  
Doctor's bills brought hospital fees—  
Where were the dollars could possibly fill  
Up gaps, that came from these ?  
What was to be the end of it all ?  
Oh, to drain life's bitter cup,  
Ah, God, to be able to stop ; sink and fall,  
For the luxury just to give up.

And still she waits ; for what does she ask ?  
For the comforts the dollar brings ?  
For the lightening of her daily task ?  
No, somewhere to put her things.  
Seven long years for this she has sighed,  
And pictured it in her dreams,  
Those things she has aired, and—laid aside,  
Where only the light of hope beams.

What have they brought her longing soul,  
Those years that are past and gone ?  
Four walls and a roof, and—God's own Goal,  
His strength still to carry on.

\* \* \* \* \*

We are men and women with work to do,  
With hands that plough and churn.  
And (maybe it hasn't occurred to you)  
With hearts that can passionately yearn  
For the feel of a life that gives, not takes,  
That warms with a gentle glow ;  
The life which unceasing conflict makes,  
That life is the one we know.

But it's good to feel the touch of the frost,  
The pure, still air that stings into life ;  
The will to go on, whatever the cost,  
The tremendous joy of the strife.  
But it's bad when body and soul are mired,  
Held in life's cold, clogging soil,  
Then pity the men and women who're tired,  
The sons and daughters of Toil.

**"SOMETHING."**

What is it that holds us ? well, I don't know ;  
The Northern lights, or sunset glow,  
That holds the world with the thrill of dawn  
And peace of even, when rest is born.  
The haunting long-drawn cry of a loon,  
That falls on a world with spring be-strewn ;  
Wistfully conscious of coming strife,  
Thrilled with the mysteries of love and life.  
The motherhood of a sitting hen,  
Her whole still being breathing—"When ?"  
A child's soft arms with their voiceless call  
That claims you "Mummy," cook, nurse-maid, All.  
A whinney forced from a colt's loan soul,  
On a strange trail with an unknown goal ;  
Freedom, old pastures, everything gone,  
Up against *Life*, with his harness on.  
A horse's nose, with it's soft caress,  
Wordlessly giving you all—no less ;  
Eyes that look straight to your soul, yet still  
Can love you or trust you, for good or ill.  
A ride with the stars, when coyotes wail,  
And the Autumn breeze tells a wintry tale,  
And sound but makes the silence complete,  
You and a "comrade," where all souls meet.  
A neighbour who comes work-worn indeed,  
To offer help in time of your need.  
Not from his store of dollars, oh, no !  
From his store of rest, equally low.  
What is it that holds us ? Can we go ?  
"Something," that's everywhere, answers, "No."

## **PART II.**

### **MISCELLANEOUS.**

## DAWN.

Have you listened to the stillness and the ticking of the  
clock,

When morning mists are weaving worlds apart,  
When the voice of silence over all creation seems to mock  
All language but the language of the heart,

When the day  
Is on the way,  
Before the sun is up ?

Before the shadows lengthen out along the way ahead,  
Before the ears, earthbound, are turned to strife ;  
Before we think we know, (forgetting all that silence  
said)

This monumental sadness we call Life—  
When the light  
Shows all things right,  
When God and you are up.



## THE FAIRY WHIRLWIND.

Silence—

Then a wind from nowhere, nowhere going,  
Sets the autumn world aglowing, glowing  
With the strife  
Of its life.

Rising up, the tired leaves  
Think how once when on the trees  
They had danced to earth's green gladness,  
Till, forgetful of all sadness,  
Up they whirl in fairy madness,  
Hurrying with the world along,  
To the magic of its song.

Echoes—

And the wind from nowhere, almost going  
To that borderland beyond man's knowing,  
Leaves a sigh  
For goodbye.

## THE BACHELOR.

Her eyes of fire were gentle too  
To those who understood,  
And Jim was one of those who knew  
Her "fifteen hands" all good;  
And, to introduce her, he always said  
"The Missus—and boss, I'll own I'm led."

The shack was cold with the heater out,  
But Jim sat on and on,  
While evening cast her shadows about,  
And the stars peeped one by one,  
And night looked down on her kingdom of dreams  
Where the truth is always what it seems.

Gone were those facts of yesterday  
With their heart-rending ache;  
No longer Jim saw the lonely way  
The years and he must take;  
No longer he heard how a dear young voice  
Thrilled for that other who was her choice.

Instead he gazed with smiling eyes,  
And found in them his own;  
And all his world in that wondrous guise—  
That palace of souls—a Home.  
But dreams will vanish, and suddenly, Jim  
Found grim reality facing him.

Saw those dark days that come to us all,  
When life seems all awry;  
Saw himself, weary, at even-fall,  
In a shack with no one by;  
With no sound of a voice to sympathise,  
And no courage to draw from smiling eyes.

Alone with silence Jim gave a laugh  
That ended in a sob :  
Suppose that he took that other path  
Where pulses for him would throb—  
What if the kisses were poor and cheap,  
If only this ache for the best could sleep.

So he hit the trail that leads due west,  
And on the "Missus" sped :  
She knew that this trail led to the best  
And joyful, she took her head.  
But Jim turned where a light was shining forth,  
'Twas south, but the "Missus" was bound for north.

And north she turned again and again,  
And still Jim brought her south ;  
And she fought for the bit with might and main,  
Though the blood oozed from her mouth :  
And with feet that scarcely touched the ground  
Around she swung, and again around.

She did not know that the hour was three,  
When all good folk should sleep.  
The only place where the best could be  
Was north, and that trail she'd keep.  
What if north were dark, and south were bright  
She knew 'twas the north that held their light.

What was it that stopped the "Missus" dead ?  
Was it some sound she caught ?  
That half whinney, the poise of her head—  
Jim knew the face that she sought ;  
And limply the lines dropped from his hand,  
"Sorry old girl—but you understand."

So the "Missus" took her head and went  
North, and stood by a gate :  
"You are right old girl in what you meant,  
"But you see we are . . . . . too late.  
"I think it is time we were getting back,"  
So the "Missus" hit the homeward track.

And all was still, while across the sky  
The Northern lights were flung  
Like some ghostly organ pipes, whereby  
Night's harmonies might be sung :  
And here with the thought of the might-have-been,  
Was the mystery of the moon's pale sheen.

And somehow a veil fell from Jim's eyes ;  
He knew that life was good :  
He knew with that knowledge that is all-wise,  
That is felt, not understood.  
So as he bade the "Missus" goodnight—  
"Thank you, old girl," he said, "you were right."

## THE FALSE PATRIOT.

The husk of a gentleman, no more—

Oh, 'twas a price that you paid  
When you took what wasn't worth paying for  
And gave your all as a 'trade' ! \*  
And now it hurts to look in your eyes,  
And see how your past all forgotten lies.

Gone, and with all that it might have meant,  
That gift twin-born with your life :  
But you settled down in sluggish content  
When 'noblesse oblige' spelt strife.  
An outlaw now, what kin can you claim—  
The living ghost of a gentleman slain ?

The living ghost ; where could you belong ?  
Ghost land could offer no home,  
Nor there in cities where living men throng,  
Is a place to call your own.  
Content in bearing a nameless name,  
You have forgotten the meaning of shame.

And so you couldn't hold what you had.  
For, God knows, it meant a fight ;  
When you're trying to shun what isn't bad  
But, you know, not strictly right—  
To be of the wilds, yet live so all can  
Look into the eyes of a gentleman.

Maybe you fought; did you ever think  
You tackled the whole wild west ?  
Who would be likely in that case to sink  
Or who would come out the best ?  
And were you honest to take a home  
And then give nought to the West of your own ?

\* Exchange. Means by which most business on a farm is done

For Canada says, I freely gave,  
Then what did you give to me ?  
A few acres broken that you might pave  
Your way to prosperity.  
What did I count in the schemes you laid ?  
Nothing; and nothing is what I repaid.

I offer all and I ask for all,  
For the very soul of you :  
And then, when a beggar you stand, I call  
My world to give you your due.  
And I pay my debt with no small sum,  
I give you a thousand souls for your one.

The soul of a loon, winging his flight  
So steady and straight and true,  
With a faith that, seeing his goal in sight  
Through the trackless trails of blue,  
Shoots down to rest like a streak of light,  
And the lake to her bosom takes her knight :

The soul of the Northern Lights that take  
From the moon and stars as well  
A thousand beams, till the night is awake  
With a magic no tongue can tell.  
Till they fade away from whence they came,  
Leaving only the glory of a name.

The soul of the bush, where pulses beat  
With life from a boundless store,  
Till the infinite silence seems complete,  
And speech but a breath, no more—  
And this language of the voiceless voice  
Of Creation's soul, was yours for the choice.

But you were deaf and then you were blind,  
And so at last you were dumb.  
And that eye of His Own, God lent mankind  
Called sympathy, could not come.  
That's what you lost, the power that can  
Make always and only a gentleman—

That sees to the very heart of things,  
And leaves the dead facts alone :  
This is how you may make for justice, wings,  
Of the whole wide world, a Home.  
God grant you may wake and see where you stand—  
A pitiful patriot of no man's land.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE WILD.

I wander through realms of sunlight,  
By trackless trails of snow,  
Where men and women sow and toil,  
For harvests the frost or hail may spoil.  
And I claim those for mine  
Who will labour, not whine,  
And my secret to them I show.

I teach the meaning of sunshine,  
Of sunset and shadow and storm,  
Of love and trust in whinney low  
That only my subjects can really know ;  
And though sometimes they sigh  
For what dollars can buy,  
I render that sigh still-born.





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**RUTH AU 25 '73**

**AUG 13 RETURN**

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